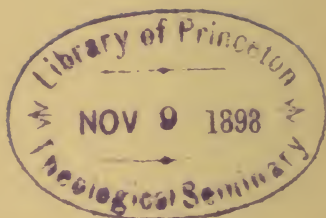


The Causes

REV. J. V. STEPHENS

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THE CAUSES

Leading to the Organization of the
Cumberland Presbyterian
Church.

✓
BY REV. J. V. STEPHENS,

Professor of Ecclesiastical History
in Cumberland University.

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House.
1898.

EXPLANATORY.

On controverted questions it has been the purpose of the author to establish his propositions, as far as possible, by citing authorities wholly neutral, or those whose ecclesiastical relations would be expected to lead them to advocate the opposite views from those set forth in this treatise. Points proved by such authorities surely cannot be questioned.

In order to give the reader an opportunity to interpret the various authors quoted, they have, as far as possible, been allowed to speak in their own words, references being made to the books and pages from which the various quotations have been taken. A list of the books consulted by the author in the preparation of this work, is furnished for the benefit of those who may desire to give the question further study.

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THE CAUSES

LEADING TO THE ORGANIZA- TION OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

It has often been claimed that one of the weaknesses of the Protestant Reformation was its own divisions. No family of the Protestant faith has shown a greater tendency to split up into small factions than the Reformed, or Presbyterian household. This has been both a fault and a virtue of the Presbyterians. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church is one of the youngest members of this distinguished ecclesiastical family. A great responsibility rests upon those who originate a new Church, thus further

dividing the people of God. The founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church fully realized this responsibility, and refused to become the founders of a new Church until the closing of ecclesiastical doors in their faces, after years of faithful efforts to pursue a different course, compelled them, in the providence of God as they believed, to take this step. Were their reasons of sufficient moment to justify their action? Before a verdict is returned attention is invited to the following historical facts.

It was a series of causes which led to the establishment of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It is not affirmed, however, that they were all of equal importance and weight. On the contrary, they were not; yet it is necessary to study all these causes

and note their several influences on the subject under consideration.

I. The first cause was the Revival of 1800.—It may seem strange that a revival of religion should divide a Church, but this is the fact in the case. Everything was quiet in the Presbyterian Church of the Cumberland Country until the Rev. James McGready, who had just arrived there from North Carolina, began his heart-searching, soul-stirring preaching to the cold, indifferent, formal church-members, as well as to the unsaved whether in the Church or out of it. It is beyond the scope of this treatise to consider the Great Awakening of 1800, which is familiar to all students of Church history. It is well known that from the time this great work was fairly begun it met with opposition

from preachers and members of the Presbyterian Church, and that this opposition became stronger and more thoroughly organized as the gracious work went forward, until finally Church courts were invoked to use their ecclesiastical machinery in crushing the life out of the revival party. Of the opposition to the revival Dr. McDonnold (*History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*, p. 40) says: "Before any other question arose between the two parties this one had split the churches asunder." In the same connection the historian shows how the revival arrayed preachers into two factions, and divided particular churches. Dr. Robert Davidson (*History of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky*, p. 135) affirms that "it was but a part of the Presbyterian

clergy of the lower settlements that were engaged in the measures [the revival] already described. These were but five in number, Messrs. McGready, Hodge, McGee, McAdow, and Rankin. All the rest of their brethren disapproved and discountenanced the work, from its commencement, as spurious."

This is not the only instance recorded in history where revival influence met with opposition from the Presbyterian Church. The Great Awakening of 1740 was opposed by the Old Side party, while the New Side party espoused its cause. In this it has been charged that the revival, or New Side party, became offensive to the anti-revival, or Old Side party. Doubtless the charge is true. It is not the purpose in this treatise to apol-

ogize for the short-comings of the revival party in the Great Awakening of 1740; but beyond doubt there was strong opposition to the revival, as such, in the Presbyterian Church. In 1740, just as in 1800, this opposition to the revival was the entering wedge which finally split the Presbyterian Church. In the first case the revival, or the New Side party, after having an ecclesiastical door slammed in its face, established the Synod of New York, and entered upon independent work; and so in the latter case the revival party, after having its ecclesiastical house torn down, and being refused admittance to any other, on honorable terms, which it sought for four years, organized the Cumberland Presbytery, and entered upon independent work. The chief points of

difference between these two cases are these: (1) the territory in the Synod of New York was much more prominent than that in the Presbytery of Cumberland; and (2) there were more strong ministers in favor of the revival in the first case than in the second. If, however, the revival and anti-revival parties be compared with each other in each of these cases, the showing for the revival party of 1800 is much more favorable.

It has been frequently urged that the revival of 1800 ran into great extravagances. This is freely granted. The beneficial results to the people and the country, and not the extravagances, are pointed to as an indication of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the divine blessing upon the work. But whatever may be said

about the extravagances in 1800, similar charges were made against the Great Awakening of 1740 in cultured New England and progressive New Jersey. In the latter instance the scholarly Jonathan Edwards was not "dazzled by the incidents of the work, nor distracted by them from the essence of it. His argument for the divineness of the work is not founded on the unusual or extraordinary character of it, nor on the impressive bodily effects sometimes attending it, such as tears, groans, outcries, convulsions, or faintings, nor on visions or ecstasies or 'impressions.' What he claims is that the work may be divine, *notwithstanding* the presence of these incidents." (Bacon's American Christianity, p. 159.)

Indeed, so strongly had the Old Side party charged extravagances in the work of 1740, that when the reunion between the Old and the New Side parties was effected in 1758, on the demand of the New Side party, the Plan of Union included the following: "When sinners are made sensible of their lost condition and absolute inability to recover themselves, are enlightened in the knowledge of Christ and convinced of his ability and willingness to save, and upon gospel encouragements do choose him for their Savior, and renouncing their own righteousness in point of merit, depend upon his imputed righteousness for their justification before God, and on his wisdom and strength for guidance and support; when upon these apprehensions

and exercises their souls are comforted, notwithstanding all their past guilt, and rejoice in God through Jesus Christ; when they hate and bewail their sins of heart and life, delight in the laws of God without exception, reverently and diligently attend his ordinances, become humble and self-denied, and make it the business of their lives to please and glorify God and do good to their fellow men; this is to be acknowledged as a gracious work of God, even though it should be attended with unusual bodily commotions or some more exceptionable circumstances, by means of infirmity, temptations, or remaining corruptions; and wherever religious appearances are attended with the good effects above mentioned, we desire to rejoice in and thank God for them."

(Briggs' American Presbyterianism, p. 318.)

The promoters of the Revival of 1800 could well afford to stand on the Plan of Union adopted by the Old and the New Side parties in forming the re-united Presbyterian Church, forty years before, and to plead the good results of the work as their justification. Dr. E. H. Gillett (History of the Presbyterian Church, vol. I., p. 422) says : "The Great Revival, which marks the opening of the present century, with all its extravagances and excesses, effectually arrested the universal tide of skepticism and irreligion. It began when religion was at the lowest ebb, and spread over a region that to superficial view was proof against its influence." What greater proof is needed that God was in the movement?

II. The next cause leading to the establishment of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was the lack of adaptation in the Presbyterian Church to the new situation in a wilderness country.

—The Rev. Richard Beard, D.D., (Biographical Sketches, pp. 32, 33) says :

“From the extensive spread of the revival, and the enlargement and multiplication of congregations, a great want of ministerial labor soon began to be felt. Another thing is to be said, which may as well be said plainly: A considerable portion of the Presbyterian ministry were not adapted in their spirit and habits to the wants of the people. This statement is not made for the purpose of stirring up strife, which was certainly bitter enough in its day; but for the purpose of presenting those facts

with which history should deal. The prevailing religious preference in the West, was Presbyterian. Presbyterian agencies were mainly employed in the revival. The new congregations wished chiefly to become and to remain Presbyterians; but there were not Presbyterian ministers enough, who sympathized with the new condition of things, to supply them with the word and ordinances."

Dr. R. E. Thompson (History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States, p. 70) writes: "A second difficulty in the Church's way was the rigidity of her polity in the matter of ministerial education. She was right in setting up a high ideal, and has benefited all the Churches of America by this. She was wrong in refusing to recognize that there are

times when a higher expediency demands a temporary relaxation of the rule. It was a just requirement for a fairly educated and fully intelligent community, which enjoyed the prosperity and the leisure of a country not newly settled. On the frontier, however, and among those who were enduring the hardships and privations of a new settlement, with but few opportunities for even the simplest education, the rigid exaction of a collegiate education for every candidate for the ministry was a fatal embarrassment." "The General Assembly," he continues, "judged of the needs of the frontiers by the standard of Philadelphia, and insisted (the people said) on 'making men gentlemen before it made them ministers.' It thus left its natural adherents to the more

adaptable ministrations of the Methodists and Baptists."

Dr. Gillett (Vol. I., pp. 403, 404) says: "Among such a people, the recluse scholar, with his logical, polished discourse read from the manuscript, was not needed. Erudition and refinement were not in demand. The hardy backwoodsman required a new type of preacher,—one who could shoulder axe or musket with his congregation, preach in shirt-sleeves and take the stump for a pulpit. Men of this stamp could not be manufactured to order in colleges. They must of necessity be trained up on the field. They were for the most part thus trained—many of them after their arrival in the region; but it was wise and necessary that they should not despise learning." Professor Zenos

(Church History, p. 330) states that as a result of the Great Revival in Kentucky "the growth by accessions of conversions was so rapid that educated ministers could not be provided for all the churches."

The historians, thus quoted, all of whom are Presbyterians, and two of whom were writing exclusively on Presbyterian history, make the following points: (1) The growth of the churches in the Cumberland Country, as a result of the revival, was so great that enough "educated ministers could not be provided for all the churches." (2) The peculiarities of this country demanded "a new type of preacher." Ministers of the proper "stamp" "could not be manufactured to order in colleges. They must, of necessity, be trained up on

the field." The fact should not be overlooked that there were no colleges in the Cumberland Country at this early day; so ministers "trained up on the field" had to be trained otherwise than in a college. (3) The General Assembly "judged of the needs of the frontiers by the standard of Philadelphia." This led to "the rigid exaction," which amounted to "a fatal embarrassment."

The Presbytery of Transylvania, organized in 1786, "from its origin," endeavored to meet this difficulty by appointing "Catechists." After the beginning of the revival, according to Dr. Davidson, "the demand for preaching soon exceeded the ability of the ordained ministers to supply it." Then by the advice of the Rev. David Rice, the oldest and most in-

fluent Presbyterian minister in Kentucky, the revival party, "in accordance with the usage of the Presbytery of Transylvania," says Dr. Davidson, (p. 224), selected "a few intelligent and zealous laymen," and licensed them "as Catechists and traveling exhorters." Probably the opposition to the revival had led the revival party to depart from "the usage of the Presbytery of Transylvania from its origin" until Mr. Rice advised them to follow "the usage of the Presbytery." Be this as it may, when the anti-revival party made objection to this custom which had been "the usage of the Presbytery of Transylvania from its origin," Mr. Rice wrote a letter to the General Assembly on the subject. While the Assembly's answer was guarded, yet,

according to Dr. Davidson (p. 230), it admitted that "when the field is too extensive, Catechists, like those of primitive times, may be found useful assistants. . . . If possessed of uncommon talents, diligent in study, and promising usefulness, they might in time purchase to themselves a good degree, and be admitted in regular course to the holy ministry."

Thus the Transylvania Presbytery by its usage "from the beginning;" the advice of Mr. Rice; and on that advice, the practice of the revival party; and the letter of the Assembly to Mr. Rice, all worked toward supplying this new country not only with a sufficient number of gospel laborers, but also with the "new type of preacher," which the country needed. This advice of the Assembly was in agree-

ment with the practice of the Church in Scotland at an earlier day, in a like necessity. The Rev. W. M. Hetherington, A.M., (History of the Church of Scotland, p. 54) speaking of the kinds of officers in the Church says: "This latter class consisted of the most pious persons that could be found, who, having received a common education, were able to read to their more ignorant neighbors, though not qualified for the ministry. When the readers were found to have discharged their duty well, and to have increased their own knowledge, they were encouraged to add a few plain exhortations to the reading of the Scriptures; and then they were termed Exhorters. If they still continued to improve, they might finally be admitted to the ministry." After the

enumeration of several things of which the foregoing is one, the author (p. 57) continues: "Such were the fundamental principles, and the chief points of the government and discipline of the Church of Scotland as stated in the Book of Discipline, drawn up by John Knox and the most eminent of the Scottish reformers; approved by the General Assembly; and subscribed by a majority of the nobles, and inferior barons, and gentry, composing the privy council of the kingdom."

But in Kentucky, early in the Nineteenth century, this attempt at adaptation to a new country with peculiar needs was cut short by ecclesiastical courts through the influence of the anti-revival party.

It is strange how many writers

have fallen into the error so frequently made, and frequently corrected, that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized because of a dissent from the Presbyterian standard of ministerial education, as such. That the question of education was involved to the extent of adapting the Church to a new country in peculiar circumstances is admitted, but that there was a desire to lower the standard of ministerial education, for its own sake, historical facts positively contradict. The policy of the revival party is fully justified by the Presbyterian historian, who says that owing to the peculiar needs of this new country "the rigid exaction of a college education for every candidate for the ministry was a fatal embarrassment" to the Presbyterian Church.

At the close of the Revolutionary War the Presbyterian Church was not surpassed by any denomination in its opportunities for rapid growth, and ability to keep pace with the development of the nation. No Church exerted a greater influence in achieving our national independence. It possessed many advantages over its Baptist and Methodist competitors, especially among the Scotch and Scotch-Irish elements, which were so large a part of the population in Kentucky and Tennessee.

The struggle in the Cumberland Country on the part of the revival party, was the attempt of Presbyterianism to adapt itself to the pioneer life in a wilderness country. Had the Presbyterian Church, instead of trying to maintain the "standard of Phila-

delphia " on the frontiers, adapted itself in educational requirements, and evangelism, to the new situation, it would to-day beyond doubt be the largest Protestant body in these United States.

"Had the Church," says Dr. Thompson (p. 69), "been able to maintain this position in the nation's religious life, and had it even been able to retain in its membership the children of the great Ulster immigration, and to continue to assimilate the New England overflow, it would now take rank, not as the third, but as the first of the great Protestant communions of America. The ranks of the Baptists and the Methodists, of the Episcopalians and the Disciples, have been swollen at its expense. Of the descendants of the Ulster Presby-

terians in America probably not much above a third are to-day Presbyterian. However large the membership and extensive the influence of the Church, therefore, it cannot be called successful even in holding its own, much less in aggressive power."

Dr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon (*American Christianity*, p. 332) accounts for the failure of the Presbyterian Church to keep pace with the growth of the country, in the following paragraph: "The Presbyterians were heavily cumbered for advance work by traditions and rules which they were rigidly reluctant to yield or bend, even when the reason for the rule was superseded by higher reasons. The argument for a learned ministry is doubtless a weighty one; but it does not suffice to prove that when college-

bred men are not to be had it is better that the people have no minister at all. There is virtue in the rule of ministerial parity ; but it should not be allowed to hinder the Church from employing in humbler spiritual functions men who fall below the prescribed standard. This the Church, in course of time, discovered, and instituted a ' minor order ' of ministers, under the title of colporteurs. But it was timidly and tardily done, and therefore ineffectively. The Presbyterians lost their place in the skirmish-line."

Adaptation on the educational question was a difficulty encountered by the Presbyterian Church in the Great Awakening of 1740, as well as in the Great Awakening of 1800. In the former, as in the latter, there were

those who stood for the "rigid exaction of a college education for every candidate for the ministry." In the former, as in the latter, as Dr. G. P. Hays (*Presbyterians*, p. 90) well says, there were those "equally anxious for a proper education; but instead of doing nothing because they could not accomplish the impracticable, insisted upon doing the best they could under the circumstances." In the former, students from Neshaminy academy could not be admitted to the ministry by the Presbytery until a Synodical Committee passed on their qualifications; in the latter, training in the Spring Hill academy did not protect a young man from a Synodical Commission.

If the Cumberland Presbyterian Church became a separate body on

account of a difference with the mother Church on the question of ministerial education, the New Side Synod of New York was organized in 1745 for a similar reason. Education, though not the prime cause in either case, entered largely into both. But it has been said that the educational controversy is not the only reason for the existence of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Two of the young men, Thomas Nelson and Samuel Hodge, who were placed under the prohibition of the Synodical Commission, and one of whom at least was not as well qualified as other young men who were placed under the same prohibition, came before the Transylvania Presbytery, and, according to Dr. Davidson (p. 251), "after a long and particular examina-

tion, the Presbytery were satisfied with regard to their doctrinal soundness, their aptness to teach, their adoption of the Confession, and their solemn promise to conform to the rules of the Church. Their former license and ordination were unanimously confirmed, and they were authorized to exercise all the functions of the sacred office." These two young men, neither of whom was up to the standard, were allowed to go on with their work. There is no violence done in supposing that the same thing would have been true of the other young men had they "adopted the Confession," and promised "to conform to the rules of the Church."

Dr. F. R. Cossitt, who made a careful study of the whole subject years

ago, believed that the main difficulty was in the fact that the Kentucky Synod, finding it had been misled by the anti-revival party (*Life of Ewing*, p. 169), "deemed the submission of the young men to their wrong measures indispensable to the justification of their Commission's proceedings.

. . . Submission, nothing less than unqualified submission, was in all cases demanded, with all the unchangeableness of the laws of the Medes and Persians, notwithstanding this had been again and again refused." There is no doubt that there is a great deal of truth in Dr. Cossitt's position. Messrs. Nelson and Hodge, who had been licensed and ordained by the afterward dissolved Cumberland Presbytery, without any adequate examination as to their literary qual-

ification, were allowed to go on, their licensure and ordination by the dissolved Presbytery holding good, on their "adopting the Confession" and promising "to conform to the rules of the Church." This is evidence that the revival was a stronger influence in bringing about separate organization than the educational issue.

The foregoing is sufficient to prove that there was something more serious than the educational difficulty, but if additional testimony is wanting it can be found in the following cases: In 1758, before the organization of the Assembly (Presbyterian Digest, p. 368), "several very earnest applications were made to the Synod by Welsh people in different parts, representing that many among them understood not the English tongue, and

unless they have a pastor capable of speaking in their own language they must live entirely destitute of ordinances ; that a certain Mr. John Griffith came some years ago from Wales, with good certificates of his Christian knowledge and piety, though he has not had a liberal education, and of being there licensed to preach the gospel ; that he has preached among them to their great satisfaction, and therefore pray the Synod to ordain him to the ministry." The Synod decided that "as the circumstances of that people are singular, and no other way appears in which they can enjoy ordinances, the Synod agree that the said Mr. John Griffith, though he has not the measure of school learning usually required, and which they judge to be ordinarily requisite,

be ordained to the work of the ministry."

In their Circular Letter some of the members of the original Cumberland Presbytery, in reference to "licensing unlearned men," said: "The Presbytery not only plead the exception made in the discipline in extraordinary cases, but also the example of a number of the Presbyteries in different parts of the United States. Among the many instances of this kind that might be mentioned are the following, viz.: Mr. Beck, who was received by the Presbytery of North Carolina; Mr. Bloodworth, by Orange; Mr. Moore, by Hanover; Mr. Marquis, by Redstone, and Mr. Kemper and Mr. Abell, by Transylvania Presbytery. . . . In short, the majority of the Cumberland Presbytery

were of the opinion, that the compilers of the Confession of Faith and Discipline of our Church, never intended it to be considered an infallible standard by which the Holy Ghost must be limited, when he calls men to that sacred office." (History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, by the Rev. James Smith, p. 678.)

It is evident that exceptions to the regular standard has been made by several Presbyteries, and more than once sanctioned by the highest Church court. The Presbytery of Transylvania, as has been shown, made at least two exceptions—one of these, Mr. Kemper, who was at first appointed as a Catechist, was ordained and settled as pastor in Cincinnati. Therefore, the conclusion must be

that another and a more powerful reason than the educational question entered into the controversy.

It is true that the new Cumberland Presbytery adopted a modified standard on ministerial education, which was a sensible course, Presbyterian historians being witnesses. But this did not mean that the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church were *opposed* to classical culture. Before the independent organization, the revival party, in a letter to the General Assembly (Smith, p. 624) said: "We never have embraced the idea of an unlearned ministry. The peculiar state of our country and the extent of the revival, reduced us to the necessity of introducing more of that description than we otherwise would. We sincerely esteem a learned and

pious ministry, and hope the Church will never be left destitute of such an ornament."

"The very first year," writes Dr. McDonnold (p. 60), "of that Presbytery's existence it addressed a circular letter to the churches under its care, in which it told those churches, and all others concerned in the case, to have no fears of any laxness in educational requirements; declaring its purpose to require a classical education in all cases where that was practicable, and when in exceptional cases and emergencies that was dispensed with, in no case to dispense with a thorough English education."

From the very beginning, the subject of education received special attention by the Presbytery. Funds were raised to assist worthy young

men, and a circulating library was purchased for their use in which were works on astronomy, logic, philosophy, Christian evidence, etc. (Minutes of Cumberland Presbytery, in Theological Medium, Vol. IX., p. 481.) The Rev. Finis Ewing, one of the fathers of the Church, was educated at Spring Hill Academy, near Nashville. While he was not a college graduate, he was by no means an ignorant man. He showed his appreciation of educational advantages by establishing, largely out of his own means, the first classical school in his part of the state; and later by giving his son, who was looking to the ministry, a thorough education. Within twelve years after the organization of the independent Presbytery, the Cumberland Presbyterians were

contemplating the founding of a college, and in 1826, four years later, which was three years before the General Assembly was organized, those founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, "who traveled in homespun clothing made by their wives, and carried text-books in their saddle-bags while they went seeking the lost among the pioneer settlements, established, through the General Synod, a college for the education of young preachers." (McDonnold, p. 61.)

In all these early days the homes of many of the preachers were the homes of the young men preparing for the ministry, and the older ministers were the teachers of their young brethren. The theory of the Church was to adapt its methods to the times,

and yet keep its ministry to the front in qualifications, as leaders of the people. Notwithstanding the small beginning of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the poverty of its membership, according to the census report of 1890, the communicants of this faith in Kentucky and Tennessee, in whose bounds the Cumberland Country was located, outnumbered the total communicants of all the other Presbyterian bodies in those States, by about 14,000. The aggregate Cumberland Presbyterian membership was greater in 1890, by over 27,000, than the aggregate membership of all the other Presbyterian Churches in the following six States: Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee and Texas. In Tennessee, alone, Cumberland Presbyterians exceeded

all other Presbyterians by about 22,000. American Presbyterianism is richer today by over 200,000 Cumberland Presbyterian communicants, besides thousands who have found homes in other Presbyterian Communion than it would be, had not the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church adapted Presbyterianism to the needs of a frontier country. It does not fall within the present scope to discuss the educational status of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church today. The well informed do not need to be told that the policy of the Church has been to keep abreast of the times. How well she has succeeded in accomplishing this undertaking, her position in the American Presbyterian sisterhood may answer.

But before dismissing this topic

there are two other things that must be mentioned. The conservatism of the Southern Presbyterian Church is well understood, therefore any disposition in this staid Communion to modify its standard on ministerial education, at this late day, is certainly significant. In 1885, the Presbytery of Chesapeake overtured the General Assembly to send down to the Presbyteries an amendment which would so modify the standards that the Presbyteries might, at their discretion, "set apart to the gospel ministry godly and experienced men, well versed in the English Bible, and in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, apt to teach, and evidently called to the ministry by the Lord through his Spirit and providence. *W* Answer

The Assembly declines to comply with the request, ample provision for extraordinary cases being made in Chap. VI., Sec. VI., Art. VI., of the Form of Government." (Alexander's Digest, p. 30.) This article referred to in the Form of Government reads as follows: "No candidate, except in extraordinary cases, shall be licensed unless he shall have completed the usual course of academical studies," etc. From 1869 to 1879, by the action of the Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church, it was the law of that Church for "exhorters" to be appointed "under control of the Presbytery."

In 1871 the Northern General Assembly instructed its Board of Publication to select for its colportage work "such persons as may also be

suitable for Sabbath school missionaries, and instruct them to establish Sabbath schools in destitute localities, under the supervision of the Presbyteries." (Presbyterian Digest, p. 440.) In 1882 the Assembly instructed the Board in reference to the work of the colporteurs that "the main emphasis is to be laid upon the work of religious visitation, and the Sabbath school work expected from them among the spiritually destitute." (Presbyterian Digest, p. 559.) This is what Dr. Bacon calls "a 'minor order' of ministers, under the title of colporteurs," but which he says "was timidly and tardily" instituted.

If the Southern Presbyterian Church, as late as 1869, found a need for "exhorters"; and the Northern Presbyterian Church, as late as 1871,

felt constrained to institute this "minor order" of ministers for work "among the spiritually destitute," surely neither of these Churches at this late day would condemn the induction of men into the ministry, who were not classical scholars, in the early years of the century, in a country where just such men must minister "among the spiritually destitute," or these "spiritually destitute" must remain "spiritually destitute." Only a few years ago, that prince among Presbyterian ministers, Dr. T. L. Cuyler, said: "Three truths are as solid and indisputable as the rocks on yonder mountain. First, we must have more preachers of the gospel of salvation. Second, when the Holy Spirit moves a Christian man to preach Christ Jesus we must not tie

him fast with ecclesiastical red tape. Third, when ministers enough cannot be got into the pulpit by long regulation roads we must open shorter roads." (Miller's Cumberland Presbyterian Church, p. 311.) If the condition of things in the Presbyterian Church led Dr. Cuyler to use the foregoing language a few years ago, what would he have said on the same question, had he been a member of the Kentucky Synod in 1805, when this Synod dissolved the Cumberland Presbytery for pursuing the very course which he here points out as the proper one, under the circumstances?

In 1867 a Joint-Committee from the Southern Presbyterian and the Cumberland Presbyterian General Assemblies met and discussed terms of organic union. The Cumberland Pres-

byterian Committee proposed to surrender the Church name and the standard of ministerial education, provided the Presbyterian Committee would agree to a modification in the phraseology of the Westminster Standards on "those points which pertain to the subject of fore-ordination, and its cognate doctrines." On the subject of ministerial education the Presbyterian Committee expressed the sentiment that "there is no difference between us; that whatever may have been the views and the policy of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in that early day, and under the exigencies of the times, the sentiment of the Church is now unanimous as to the necessity of an educated ministry, in the sense in which our standards make it obligatory." (Alexander's

Digest, p. 440.) It is hardly necessary to say, in this connection, that "the views and policy" of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church on this subject were exactly the same in 1867 that they were from the beginning. So this Committee of the Southern Presbyterian General Assembly being witness, the question of ministerial education is not, and has not been, the bugbear that it has often been made to appear. The Presbyterian Committee spoke of "the exciting times," in the early part of the century, growing out of the revival; and expressed its judgment that "in such a time there is a natural tendency in the minds of men to extremes, and even the best men do not act with the same sober judgment, and in the same prayerful deliberation, as when under

less exciting influences." But granting that "the exciting times" led good men to act with less "sober judgment," and less "prayerful deliberation" than the gravity of the situation demanded, thus leading "the minds of men to extremes" on the matter of ministerial education in those bygone years; yet the difference between these two Churches on this subject does not account for the failure to effect organic union between them over thirty years ago. In view of this scrap of history no intelligent Southern Presbyterian, who claims to be familiar with the doings of his General Assembly, can afford to repeat the ill-founded charge that the existence of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to-day is due to a policy of an uneducated ministry.

To an intelligent and discriminating public, the action of the fathers of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church on the matter of education, on the frontiers a hundred years ago, is open for inspection. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church has no fear as to what the verdict of the well-informed public would be, on the necessity and wisdom of the course pursued by the founders of this Church amid their surroundings in the wilderness. While the fathers of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, adapted themselves to the needs of their day; they at the same time fell upon the happy expedient which makes the sentiment of the Church they founded "unanimous as to the necessity of an educated ministry, in the sense in which" the Southern

Presbyterian "standards make it obligatory." But Presbyterian historians show that the Presbyterian Church failed to adapt itself to the situation in the Southwest early in the Nineteenth century, and that this failure was the great weakness of the Church. However, the course of both the Southern and Northern General Assemblies about the year 1870, as has already been shown, is another evidence as to the wisdom of the course of our fathers.

Besides the deliverances of the highest Church courts, there are many thoughtful Presbyterians who believe that, even now, their standard of ministerial education would be better adapted to their needs if it were modified somewhat in the same way that the Cumberland Presbyterians modified it long ago.

While this question has been very briefly stated, it is evident that the question involved was one of much greater magnitude than that of education, in itself. It was one of that broad character of adaptation to the people and the times. The failure of the Presbyterian Church to adjust itself to the situation, was its "fatal embarrassment," and caused it not to be "successful even in holding its own, much less in aggressive power." Because of this the "Presbyterians lost their place in the skirmish line." In the light of these facts Cumberland Presbyterians are willing for the public to judge of the wisdom of the course of their fathers.

III. The final and principal cause leading to the establishment of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was

one of doctrine.—It has not been affirmed that all the revival preachers were not in harmony with the Westminster Confession of Faith. Mr. McGready and some others doubtless were. When the time for independent action came these made terms for themselves with the mother Church. But it is evident that a large number of these revival preachers did not accept the Westminster Confession without reservations. The Adopting Act of 1729 provided for this. Dr. Briggs (*How Shall We Revise?* p. 31) says: "The American Presbyterian Church, in 1729, adopted the Westminster Standards in a catholic spirit. They adopted not the whole doctrine, but the system of doctrine; not all the articles, but the essential and necessary articles.

. . . The term adopted in 1788 is as follows: 'Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?' This is not so clear as it ought to be. It might be made more definite by inserting its historic interpretation into it."

The Adopting Act, of the Synod of Philadelphia, in 1729, referred to above, among other things, contained the following: "And we do also agree that all the Presbyteries within our bounds shall always take care not to admit any candidate of the ministry into the exercise of the sacred function but what declares his agreement in opinion with all the essentials and necessary articles of said Confession, either by subscribing the said Con-

fession of Faith and Catechisms, or by a verbal declaration of their assent thereto, as such minister or candidate shall think best. And in case any minister of this Synod, or any candidate for the ministry, shall have any scruple with respect to any article or articles of said Confession or Catechisms, he shall at the time of his making said declaration declare his sentiments to the Presbytery or Synod, who shall, notwithstanding, admit him to the exercise of the ministry within our bounds, and to ministerial communion, if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge his scruples or mistake to be only about articles not essential and necessary in doctrine, worship or government. But if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge such ministers or candidates errone-

ous in essential and necessary articles of faith, the Synod or Presbytery shall declare them incapable of communion with them. And the Synod do solemnly agree, that none of us will traduce or use any opprobrious terms of those that differ from us in these extra-essential and not necessary points of doctrine, but treat them with the same friendship, kindness, and brotherly love, as if they had not differed from us in such sentiments." (Thompson, pp. 331, 332.) Dr. Briggs says: "The first rupture brought on by violence was a severe lesson to the strict subscriptionists and narrow dogmatists, and the reunion re-established the whole Church on the platform of the original Adopting Act. When the Constitution was adopted, the American

Presbyterian Church adhered to its original position, and there it stands to-day after another century of progress, disruption, reunion, and marvelous growth." (American Presbyterianism, p. 373.) Thus the "catholic spirit" of 1729 was maintained by the Assembly in 1788.

The Rev. Albert Barnes (Way of Salvation, p. 125) said: "The act of Synod [i. e., Adopting Act] was the basis of the union in 1758; and this proviso has never been withdrawn or repealed; and is, in fact, an essential part of the Standards of the Presbyterian Church. In that article, provision is made for a difference of opinion which may be known, and admitted and tolerated, in the Presbyteries, where that difference does not amount to a denial of what is '*essen-*

tial or necessary in doctrine, worship, or government.' It is the inalienable privilege and right of each and every Presbytery to judge in this matter; and this right is secured, no less by the constitution of the Church, than by the word of God."

Thus it seems that even after the organization of the Assembly the idea of liberal subscription had not passed away. Even to this day, according to Dr. Briggs (*How Shall We Revise?* pp. 29, 30), "the term of subscription means one thing in Western Pennsylvania, another thing in central New York. It is one thing in Baltimore, another thing in our metropolis [New York]. Presbyterianism changes its complexion as we pass from State to State and from city to city. The real test of orthodoxy in the Presbyteries

is not the Westminster Confession in its historic sense—is not the term of subscription in its historical meaning. It is the system of doctrine held by the majority of the ministers, and the term of subscription as interpreted by them. It is in general the systems of doctrine of American dogmaticians, with such measure of departure therefrom as the majority of a Presbytery may deem it wise to allow.”

It appears that the Rev. Barton W. Stone, who was a contemporary of the revival party in the Transylvania Presbytery and who was ordained by this Presbytery, made certain reservations in adopting the Westminster Confession. Dr. E. B. Crisman (*Origin and Doctrines*, p. 79) quotes from the autobiography of Mr. Stone as follows: “In this State of mind, the

day appointed for my ordination found me. I had determined to tell the Presbytery honestly the state of my mind, and to request them to defer my ordination until I should be better informed and settled. The Presbytery came together, and a large congregation attended. Before its constitution, I took aside the two pillars of it, Doctor James Blythe and Robert Marshall, and made known to them my difficulties, and that I had determined to decline ordination at that time. They labored, but in vain, to remove my difficulties and objections. They asked me how far I was willing to receive the Confession. I told them, as far as I saw it consistent with the word of God. They concluded that was sufficient. I went into Presbytery, and when the question was pro-

prosed, 'Do you receive and adopt the Confession of Faith, as containing the system of doctrines taught in the Bible?' I answered aloud, so that the whole congregation might hear, 'I do, as far as I see it consistent with the word of God.' No objection being made, I was ordained."

So these revival preachers, in making exceptions to certain articles, unless the Presbytery decided that these articles were "essential or necessary in doctrine, worship, or government," were only exercising their right of adopting "the Westminster Confession in its historic sense." Many before them had exercised the same right, and some after them claimed the same privilege. In 1829 the Rev. Albert Barnes preached a sermon on "The Way of Salvation."

The more strict subscriptionists took exception to his teaching, and the result was that Mr. Barnes was placed on trial in 1830. Not satisfied with the result, the strict subscriptionists, in 1835, again brought Mr. Barnes to trial, this time on charges based on his *Notes on Romans*, though the charges were substantially the same as in the former instance. The case was finally settled by the Assembly in 1836, in favor of Mr. Barnes. His strong plea was subscription to the Westminster Confession "in its historic sense." Truly does Dr. Briggs (*How Shall We Revise?* p. 29) say: "The battle in the Presbyterian Church since 1729 has been a battle between loose subscription and strict subscription." The battle which the fathers of the Cumberland Presby-

terian Church fought was one of this character. They stood for liberal subscription, while the anti-revival party stood for strict subscription ; and had the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church been allowed that broad liberty of liberal subscription for which the Adopting Act of 1729 provided, and which many Presbyterians before them had claimed, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church would never have been organized. Its birth was a strong protest against strict subscription.

The revival preachers could not require of the young men strict subscription while they themselves generally held to liberal subscription, so the young men were allowed to adopt the Confession of Faith, making exceptions to certain articles, according to

the Adopting Act of 1729. The revival party, in a letter to the Assembly, in 1807, (Smith, p. 622) said: "You will be told that they [the young men] were not regularly licensed, having only received the Confession of Faith partially, but the fears which caused that exception, rose merely from the concise manner in which the highly mysterious doctrine of divine decrees is there expressed, which was thought led to fatality."

The "Circular Letter" sent out by the new Cumberland Presbytery, explaining their reasons for existence, and their position, (Smith, p. 677) stated "that those men who were licensed, both learned and unlearned, were only required to adopt the Confession of Faith partially; that is, as far as they believed it to agree with

the word of God." Dr. Davidson (p. 227) writes that the young men "expressed their willingness to receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of the Church, with a single exception, but that exception was very significant. They professed to believe that the idea of fatality was there taught, under the high and mysterious doctrines of election and reprobation, and objected accordingly." Again, the same author (p. 255) says: "It was not the want of classical learning, but *unsoundness in doctrine*, the adoption of the Confession with *reservations*, that created the grand difficulty; and the removal of this hindrance would have wonderfully facilitated the accommodation of the other. The able historian [the Rev. James Smith] of the Cumber-

land Presbyterians himself admits this in several places." Dr. Davidson (p. 256, note) quotes approvingly from Mr. Smith as follows: "Moreover, it was the adherence of the young men to these views, that produced the final separation of the two parties; for all the young men afterwards proposed to the Transylvania Presbytery, that they, as a body, would submit to a re-examination, with the understanding that they should be indulged in their conscientious scruples on this subject."

It has already been pointed out that Thomas Nelson and Samuel Hodge, who had been ordained by the Cumberland Presbytery, came before the Transylvania Presbytery, and on their making strict subscription to the Confession of Faith, the

Presbytery decided that their ordination should stand, notwithstanding their deficiencies in literary attainments. On this point, Dr. Davidson quotes Mr. Smith with approbation as follows: "As the literary attainments of Mr. Hodge were inferior to those of most of the young men licensed or ordained by Cumberland Presbytery, we are warranted in the conclusion, that the only very serious difficulty existing between the two bodies consisted in the rejection, by the members of the Council, of what they deemed fatality."

The Synod of Kentucky referred the cases of the revival men to the Presbytery of Transylvania for adjudication. The Presbytery announced the following in reference to the young men: "With relation to those young

men licensed and ordained by the aforesaid Presbytery, we do humbly conceive that a formal examination of them respecting *doctrine and discipline* is indispensable, under present circumstances, for us to be satisfied, as a Presbytery, respecting their sentiments; and consequently, whether we are agreed in point of doctrine, without which a union would be inconsistent, and afford no security for future peace and harmony in the Church. From hence it may be easily inferred, that an unequivocal adoption of our Confession of Faith is also indispensable. This would be only placing them on the same grounds on which we ourselves stand, and any other could not be advisable or desirable to either those young men or ourselves. For them to adopt the

Confession of Faith only in *part*, and we the *whole*, would, by no means, in our opinion, effect a union according to truth and reality; and we conceive a nominal union would not prove a sufficient security against future difficulties; and whatever inference may be drawn by others, respecting what is called fatality, from our views, as expressed in the Confession of Faith, respecting the divine sovereignty, in the decrees of predestination and election, we conceive that no such conclusion can follow from the premises as there laid down." (Smith, pp. 631, 632.)

The foregoing quotation from the deliverance of the Presbytery of Transylvania clearly proves that in March, 1808, the said Presbytery regarded the difficulty as being one of *doctrine*

and discipline, and not one of *education* in any sense worthy of mention. Dr. Thompson (p. 74) speaking of the young men, says that they were not "able to give an entire assent to the teaching of the Westminster Confession, especially on the subjects of predestination and perseverance."

In 1824 there appeared from the press a pamphlet bearing this title: "A Brief History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the Proceedings of the Synod of Kentucky, relative to the late Cumberland Presbytery, in which is brought to view a brief account of the origin and present standing of the people usually denominated Cumberland Presbyterians; as taken from official documents and facts in possession of Synod. Published by order of Synod at their sessions held

in Harrodsburg, October, 1822." On page 26 of this pamphlet, the Synod of Kentucky makes this very interesting statement: "It is moreover due to the cause of truth and candor, as well as to our Church at large, and the public generally, to correct a statement, or solemnly disavow the truth of a statement, widely circulated in the account given of the Cumberland Presbyterians in 'Buck's Theological Dictionary.' (Fifth Edition, by W. W. Woodward, p. 419.) It is there stated that the 'Commission exhibited many charges, etc., all of which were chiefly comprised in the two following, viz:— (1) Licensing men to preach the gospel who had not been examined on the languages. (2) That those men who were licensed, both learned and less learned, had been only required

to adopt the Confession of Faith partially, that is, as far as they believed it to agree with the word of God."

"This latter charge is true, but the former is not. And for the truth of this disavowal, we appeal to the testimony of those members of the Commission of Synod who are yet living. We appeal to the records of that Commission, where no such charge can be found specified or tabled against the Presbytery on that occasion. We appeal to the fact of the Transylvania Presbytery's having subsequently, under the connivance and approbation of the Synod, received two of those young men [Messrs. Nelson and Hodge] alluded to in the statement in question. And we appeal to the expressions of the Synod, in their expla-

nation and defense to the General Assembly already given, which says : ' Further, Synod thought that among so many young men there might be found at least a few, who would shortly be qualified for the office of the gospel ministry, could they be induced to use the proper means.' It is therefore denied that the charge under consideration is true." Thus it will be seen that twelve years after the organization of the new Cumberland Presbytery, the Synod of Kentucky of the Presbyterian Church, bore the foregoing important testimony, which proves the correctness of the proposition under discussion, namely, that " the final and principal cause leading to the establishment of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was one of *doctrine*," rather than that of *education*,

This testimony was given after the lapse of years, when excitement had given place to calm reflection, and for the truth of it an appeal was made to men then living, as well as to the records. Being published in self-vindication, it is the strongest of evidence.

Dr. Charles Hodge (Church Polity, p. 359) says: "It is well known that the Cumberland Presbytery had, for some time, persisted in licensing and ordaining men who had not received a liberal education, and *who refused to adopt the Confession of Faith.*" Dr. Hodge is wrong in saying that these men refused to adopt the Confession of Faith. Perhaps he means to say that they adopt it, excepting certain articles; if so, he is correct. These young men adopted it exactly as the

Adopting Act of 1729 allowed them to do; and just as many Presbyterian ministers before them had done.

If further proof is needed that the separation was due more to the question of *doctrine* than to that of *education*, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church shall furnish that proof. In the Assembly's Digest (p.640) it is said that these men "were licensed as probationers for the ministry, having adopted the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, with the exception of the idea of fatality, which they believed to be taught in that book under the high and mysterious doctrine of election and reprobation. They adopted the Confession of Faith as far as they understood it; meaning that they did not understand what is taught concerning eternal election and reprobation."

tion." Again, (p. 641) it is stated that "the Commission requested, in a friendly manner, the majority of the Cumberland Presbytery to give the reasons why, in licensing and ordaining persons to preach the gospel, they required them to adopt the Confession of Faith, so far only as they in reason think it corresponds with the Scriptures. The reply was, that the Confession of Faith was human composition and fallible, and that they could not in conscience feel themselves bound any further than they believe it corresponds with Scriptures." Or, in other words, to the effect that they planted themselves on the principle of the Adopting Act of 1729, whereby a probationer was allowed to except any article or articles, when the Presbytery would de-

termine whether such exceptions were vital to the Christian system.

In a letter to the Rev. J. W. Stephenson, in 1811, in reference to the independent Presbytery, the Assembly (Assembly's Digest, p. 645) spoke as follows: "The men of whom you speak, went out from us because they were not of us. The objection they make to our Confession of Faith, as if it taught the doctrine of fatality, we fear is not so much the result of a defect of understanding, as of a disposition to misrepresent. For who could dream that the doctrine of fatality was taught in an instrument, in which it is declared expressly, that the liberty of second causes is not impaired? We do not object to your appointment of a committee to confer with these men, but we wish you to

be careful not to yield any principle either in doctrine or government." If the Confession did not teach "the doctrine of fatality," what serious objection could there have been in allowing these men at their ordination to adopt it, "with the exception of the idea of fatality?"

In 1814, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (Assembly's Digest, p. 645) adopted a report in reference to "the Cumberland body," which said "that the grounds of their separation from us were, that we would not relax our discipline, and *surrender some important doctrines* of our Confession of Faith."

Dr. F. R. Cossitt (Life of Ewing, pp. 350, 351) pertinently states the case thus: "It is a subject of debate whether the prominent cause of com-

plaint and censures against the Cumberland Presbytery for licensing and ordaining certain young men, was because they were permitted to adopt the Confession of Faith with the exception of fatality or only so far as agreeable to the word of God, or because they had not completed a classical education ; or whether both were causes equally prominent. To say that the former was the cause of complaint, was to sustain the old members of Cumberland Presbytery, according to Presbyterian usage in North Carolina, where most of them had been trained for the ministry. To say that the latter was the cause, would be to sustain them, on the ground that most of these young men were so much superior in literary attainments to one of their own num-

ber, whose licensure and ordination by the Cumberland Presbytery were afterwards recognized and confirmed by Transylvania Presbytery. To say that both were causes equally prominent, is still triumphantly to sustain them by the doings of Presbyterians themselves."

Reference has already been made to the attempt at organic union between the Cumberland Presbyterian and the Southern Presbyterian Churches in 1867. On that occasion the Cumberland Presbyterian Committee proposed to surrender the standard of ministerial education of its Church, and to adopt that of the Southern Presbyterian Church as the standard of the united Church. It has already been noted that the Committee from the Southern Church

bore testimony to the fact that the question of education was not the cause of the failure to consummate organic union.

It now remains to inquire why organic union was not effected. While the Cumberland Presbyterian Committee proposed to surrender the Church name, and to adopt for the united Church the standard of the Southern Church on ministerial education, it asked that the Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church be adopted as the Confession of the united Church, "or, as an alternative to the above," the Cumberland Presbyterian Committee proposed "to adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechism of the Presbyterian Church modified" on "those points which pertain to the subject of fore-ordina-

tion, and its cognate doctrines," or to make "a new compilation upon the Westminster Standards," which "shall exclude all phraseology and modes of expression which can plausibly be construed to favor the idea of fatality or necessity."

The proposition of the Cumberland Presbyterian Committee was rejected, and organic union failed because the Southern Church was not willing either to modify the wording of the Westminster Confession on "those points which pertain to the subject of fore-ordination, and its cognate doctrines," or to make "a new compilation upon the Westminster Standards," which "shall exclude all phraseology and modes of expression which can plausibly be construed to favor the idea of fatality or necessity."

The Committee from the Southern Assembly reported to that body the proceedings of the Joint-Committee. The report was referred to a Special Committee whose report thereon was adopted by the Assembly, and is as follows: "The Assembly hereby records its devout acknowledgment to the great Head of the Church for the manifest tokens of his presence with the Committees of Conference during their deliberations, as evinced by the spirit of Christian candor, forbearance and love displayed by both parties in their entire proceedings. The Assembly regards the object for which that Committee was appointed as one fully worthy of the earnest endeavors and continued prayers of God's people in both branches of the Church represented in the Committee; but at

the same time it is compelled, in view of the terms for effecting any organic union, suggested by the Committee of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, to declare that, regarding the present period as one very unfavorable for making changes in our standards of faith and practice, it is more especially so for effecting changes so materially modifying the system of doctrine which has for centuries been the distinguishing peculiarity and the eminent glory of the Presbyterian Churches, both of Europe and the United States." (Alexander's Digest, pp. 439, 440.) Thus it was a question of *doctrine* that caused this attempt at organic union to fail. The Southern Church would not agree to union except on the basis of the Westminster Standards ; and the Cumberland Pres-

byterian Church would not agree to adopt a Confession of Faith, which, to say the least, seemed to teach something different from the "whosoever-will" gospel, which was preached from her pulpits, and earnestly believed by her membership.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church could not accept the following phraseology in the Presbyterian Confession: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are

predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto ; and all to the praise of his glorious grace. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season ;

are justified adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice" (Chapter III. Sections III, IV, V, VI and VII.) Again, "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are

incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved." (Chapter X. Sections III and IV.)

The Rev. James I. Vance, D.D., a prominent minister in the Southern Presbyterian Church, preached a sermon, in 1898, on "Predestination," in which (pp. 4, 5) he said: "The difficulties raised by this doctrine are not imaginary. They are very real. Is God arbitrary? Is he a partial God? Has he, from all eternity, and apart from all voice and act of ours, sovereignly decreed one portion of the human race to everlasting happiness,

and another portion to everlasting woe? Is the world what it is because of God's foreordination? If so, how can God escape responsibility for the existence of sin? Is not divine justice reduced to a fiction? Do not God's eternal decrees brand him with favoritism in that highest and most sacred of all the realms of life—the spiritual? These are some of the difficulties connected with predestination. It is useless to deny them, for they are there and insistent. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to inquire whether they are difficulties that inhere in the doctrine or difficulties that arise because of the limitations of human thought in its efforts to apprehend and understand the doctrine." The author then goes to the Bible to find the doctrine of predesti-

nation. The founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church would have had no fault to find with his Biblical interpretation of the doctrine. But the author does not attempt to make any defense of the phraseology of the Presbyterian Standards, as quoted above. On page 14, he says that "the dogmaticians have divorced God's decrees from God's heart. They have made the doctrine into a dogma, dry and sapless; they have reduced it to a meatless skeleton and offered it to the soul to feed upon. Having lost its fragrance, its bloom, its life-beat, is it strange that men have come to regard it as a hard doctrine? If predestination is only the arbitrary fiat of an *a priori* God, there is little in it to comfort faith or encourage hope. But that is not pre-

dédestination ; it is the nightmare of it. Rather than believe in such a God as this, I prefer not to know him at all." It was not the doctrine of predestination as presented in the Scriptures to which the fathers of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church objected, but to "the nightmare of it" as presented in the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church. Perhaps none of these men would have gone so far as Dr. Vance, in saying that "rather than believe in such a God as this" they would "prefer not to know him at all." Doubtless they would all have agreed with Dr. Vance in these words (p. 15): "The Bible teaches that God's decree, instead of destroying, establishes the right of choice on the part of his creatures. God projected the human race along the lines

of free agency. A part of his eternal plan was that man should not be an automaton, but an intelligent being, susceptible to motives, and invested with the right and power freely to choose; so that predestination, instead of preventing man's free agency, is its everlasting decretal."

The following language, attributed to Dr. McCosh, is applicable here: "To carry up human theories into high heavenly truths is like constructing walls and planning railways in the Empyrean above the clouds. I believe most devoutly in the good sovereignty of God, but I refuse to let human logic draw conclusions which would strip man of his freedom and thereby free him from responsibility." (*How Shall We Revise?* p. 58.) In reference to the

teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Rev. Erskine N. White, D.D., pertinently asks: "Where is there any statement of the freedom of every man to accept or reject Christ freely offered in the gospel? Where is set forth that fundamental truth of the Calvinistic system, that man, and man alone, is to be blamed if he is lost." (*How Shall We Revise?* p. 60.)

While the question of revision was before the Northern Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, D.D., contrasted the positions of the two sides after this manner: "God does his utmost to save everybody; that is our position. God does his utmost to save a part and passes by the rest; that is the other position. That last, according to what seems to

us the only fair mode of interpretation, is the doctrine of our Confession of Faith. And it amounts to nothing for the advocates of the latter to say that we mistake their views so long as they refuse to alter by so much as a syllable those expressions in the Confession that make it necessary for us to suppose that such are their views. We have no disposition to say that they hold opinions that are more brutal than they have the courage possibly to confess. We only say that the revisionists represent the doctrine of an unlimited atonement, and that the anti-revisionists represent the doctrine of a limited atonement, and claim to believe in a God who ordains some men to perdition before they are born, and consistently therewith withholds from

them the influences of regenerating power". (How Shall We Revise? pp. 91, 92.)

Prof. Llewellyn J. Evans, D.D., uses the following strong language in reference to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith: "We are somewhat tired of a Confessionalism which in the third century of its existence is content to be still on the defensive, to be still explaining and re-explaining, ever at the end finding its explanations useless, and beginning all over again; which despairs of making any impression on the evangelical Christianity outside of its own bounds; and with face to the past, and back to the future, drones monotonous pæans of self-glorification. In all this we find nothing whereof to be proud, nothing to stir the blood, nothing to inspire enthusi-

asm. We would fain to see a Confessionalism of another type; one that dared trust itself; that put other creeds, if need be, on the defensive; that carried in its own bosom the prophecy of victory; that bore within itself the promise and the potency of development; that could adapt itself more intelligently to the new conditions of scientific, critical and religious thinking—a Confessionalism so distinctively and ringingly Scriptural that all Christians who accept and honor the Bible as the Word of God, would hear the echo of its ring in their own inmost convictions—a Confessionalism that would encourage its adherents to go forward with a faith born of the assurance that the future is its own. . . . The ‘hard side’ of Calvinism, of which we hear

so much, is for the most part extra-scriptural, if not unscriptural. Its gloomy, repellent features are largely the excrescences of a presumptuous logic, and of a one-sided dogmatic exegesis. 'The Reprobation' of the Westminster Confession is nowhere affirmed in Scripture. The proof-texts for our 'hard doctrines' to be sure, are taken from the Bible; the misfortune is that they prove nothing of what they are cited to prove." (How Shall We Revise? pp. 44, 45, 46)

Prof. Marvin R. Vincent, D.D., in showing that Romans, chapters ix., x. and xi., do not establish the doctrine of unconditional election, as is claimed by some, (How Shall We Revise? p. 62) says that "these chapters, as they are the most difficult of Paul's writings, have been most mis-

understood and misapplied. Their most dangerous perversion is that which draws from them the doctrine of God's arbitrary predestination of individuals to eternal life or eternal perdition."

Dr. Briggs clearly shows that the Westminster divines, and many since who held to the Westminster Standards, believe some children are not of the elect, and that those of that number who die in infancy are lost, as well as those who may live to the years of accountability. He says that Jonathan Edwards "takes ground for the damnation of infants, in very plain language;" and "Nathaniel Emmons also held to the theory of the damnation of non-elect infants." (*How Shall We Revise?* p. 118.) Dr. Briggs concludes this subject as fol-

lows: "The Presbyterian Church no longer believes in the doctrines explicitly set forth in the Tenth Chapter, Sections III, IV. It is simple honesty to make this confession and to revise them, in some way, out of the Confession. They cannot be explained away by speculative dogmatics. They may be cut away, or new statements may be substituted for them. Something must be done for their revision. There can be no peace until the doctrine of the universal damnation of the heathen and their babes is removed from the creed of the Presbyterian Church." (*How Shall We Revise?* p. 130.)

The seven authorities quoted from, on these hard doctrines of the Westminster Standards, are all Presbyterians. Towards the close of the

Nineteenth century, they voice what was the sentiment of the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, early in the century. During the discussion before the Alliance of the Reformed Churches at Belfast, Ireland, in 1884, in reference to admitting the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to membership in that body, the Rev. Dr. Calderwood said: "As I have read the history of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, it seems to have sprung up in a season of revival from opposition to a hyper-Calvinistic form of teaching, which many brethren and which I myself could not follow or adopt, and which I should ask to be delivered from, if I were held responsible for it in the Church to which I belong. I do not hold the Necessitarian theory of Will advo-

cated by Jonathan Edwards and my devotion to the Westminster Confession is not affected by a rejection of Necessitarianism. I therefore sympathize with those brethren who are placed in the position of being regarded as not Calvinistic, because they have disapproved of what they conscientiously believe to be hyper-Calvinistic." (Proceedings, p. 147.)

The Rev. Prof. Monod speaking to the same question affirmed: "When Calvin framed his admirable doctrine of the grace of God in that shape, it was the necessity of the moment he had before him. This doctrine in a particular form was the true form for the Sixteenth century—but God has not made us to live in the Sixteenth century. Has God not led his Church, and are we not to be as true to his

direction as we are true to the Bible, where we seek our doctrine? In a doctrine we find two parts, a fundamental and a historial part—the first permanent, the second modifiable. There is a Confession higher than the Westminster, and that is the Confession of the Bible.” (Proceedings p. 148.)

On the same occasion the Rev. Dr. Story said: “I commend in the highest sense what these brethren have done. It is a general and broad principle of liberty that a Christian Church should revise its standards and reconsider its formulas; and I welcome these brethren to our Alliance as having done, in the exercise of that liberty, that which I consider one of the highest prerogatives, and may become one of the most impera-

tive duties, that any Christian Church can exercise." (p. 154.) The Rev. Dr. Morris told the Alliance that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had been trying "to eliminate from the Westminster Confession, not Calvinism proper, but what it regards as *fatalism*, embodied in the phraseology of our Symbols." (p. 159.)

If testimony is worth anything, it appears that a clear case has been made out, that the question of *doctrine* was a much more vital issue leading to the organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and in maintaining a separate denominational existence, than the matter of *ministerial education*. The bulk of testimony introduced has come from Presbyterian sources—their historians and Church judicatories furnishing it. Three

causes, directly and indirectly, led to the organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, namely, *the Great Awakening*, or Revival of 1800; the matter of *adaptation*, or education of the ministry; and the matter of *doctrine*, the last cause by no means being the least. Many who are high in the councils of the Reformed Churches have approved the position of the Church on the question of *doctrine*. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church came into existence because of a *doctrinal issue* and her separate identify has been, and is yet, maintained for the same reason.

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